



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## CHILD LABOR AND THE JUVENILE COURT

---

BY JAMES A. BRITTON, M. D.,  
Chicago.

---

My reason for speaking on the relation of child labor to delinquency is not because I have anything new to say, but because there have been things said on the subject that are well worth repeating. A few years ago a school boy who deserved a whipping got one; now a school teacher who finds it necessary to whip a child is considered incompetent. Our courts likewise have undergone a change. At one time everyone who had committed a crime had, as a matter of course, to be punished. The existence of the Juvenile Court is evidence that the old idea is losing ground. It is now considered much more important to find out the real cause of a crime than to punish the particular criminal.

Thinking people of to-day give but two reasons for punishing criminals: first, isolation necessary to protect others from contagion; second, restraint so that a diseased or abnormal mental condition may be treated. On account of the results obtained from conventional methods of punishing criminals a large-sized doubt has arisen as to the social value of our efforts. This is especially true with the juvenile offenders. The more young criminals are studied the oftener the question is asked as to the amount of personal responsibility they bear for their crimes. It is generally acknowledged that inheritance and environment have far more to do with the production of crime than any other influence. But inheritance is simply the effects of environment transmitted. We are fond of saying "blood will tell," but what we should say is, "Environment will tell whether immediate or transmitted."

It happens that most of our crime-producing environment is in our cities, and as some wise one has said that the Lord made the country, but had nothing to do with the towns, it should follow that those who made the towns are responsible for this environment. Because of the feeling that crime, and especially juvenile crime, is caused by an environment for which society in general is responsible, we have the Juvenile Court as it is to-day. This

court, with its accessory probation officers, tries to discover the particular influences which cause crime, also to discover whether each particular young offender has had more of a dose of "environment" than the antidote of helpful influence of a thoughtful probation officer can counteract.

One of the elements of this environment, and by no means the least, is child labor. This has been said by nearly every one who has given the subject any thought, and especially by Morrison, Mrs. Kelley, Travis, Miss Goldmark and others. The record of the first one hundred delinquent boys and the first twenty-five delinquent girls which were examined this year in the Chicago Juvenile Court is taken as a basis for the following figures. (See page 113.) The record is fairly representative of the twenty-five hundred delinquents examined in the past year and the percentages do not vary to any considerable extent.

Of the one hundred delinquent boys, sixty-five of whom were past fourteen, only one had finished the eighth grade, and only eleven had finished the sixth grade, and all but ten of these one hundred boys, were born in this country. Fifty-seven had been in the street trades—forty-three newsboys, twelve errand and messenger boys and two peddlers. Thirty had had miscellaneous shop and office jobs, and only thirteen of the one hundred claimed to have never worked. Of this thirteen only six were past fourteen years of age. Not a single boy had ever been apprenticed in any trade.

Sixty of these boys were physically considerably below normal, but contrary to several published statements we found only one case of acquired venereal disease. This same percentage of venereal disease among the delinquent boys under sixteen holds for the two thousand which were examined last year.

While eight of the one hundred boys were under twelve years of age, none of the girls were under twelve. All but two of the girls were born in this country, and while four of the twenty-five had finished the eighth grade, not one of them had entered the high school. Only four of the girls had never worked and only two of these four were past fourteen years of age. The general physical condition of the girls was much better than that of the boys of the same age, but forty per cent. of these twenty-five were suffering from acquired venereal disease.

At the present rate eight per cent. of all the children and twelve

## RECORD OF 100 DELINQUENT BOYS AND 25 GIRLS EXAMINED IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF CHICAGO.

## Boys.

Physical Condition.	WHERE BORN.		Age.	Grade Finished.	No. Children in Family.	OCCUPATION.		Work.	Charge.
	Boys.	Parents.				Father.	Mother.		
Good...40 Fair...45 Poor...15	Native...90 Foreign...10	29 71	8... 2 9... 0 10... 4 11... 2 12... 6 13... 21 14... 28 15... 18 16... 19	2... 2 3... 10 4... 29 5... 32 6... 16 7... 10 8... 1 9... 1 10... 1 11... 1 12... 1	1... 3 2... 10 3... 15 4... 19 5... 19 6... 17 7... 1 8... 4 9... 2 10... 1 11... 1 12... 1	Dead... 16 Deserted... 4 Skilled labor... 30 Unskilled... 35 Business... 8 Clerks... 7 Stepfather... 1	Dead... 16 Housework (home)... 16 Washes and scrubs... 12 Boarding house... 3 Dressmaker... 2 Baker... 2 Sick in hospital... 2 Clerk... 4 Stepmother... 4	Never worked... 13 Newsboy... 43 Errand boys, messengers... 12 Peddling... 2 Shopwork... 16 Office boys... 4 Odd jobs... 10	Stealing... 50 Burglary... 16 Running away... 15 Fighting with weapons... 7 Truancy... 6 Drink... 2 Cigarettes... 1 Concealed weapons... 1 Jew-baiting... 1 Pulling off trolley... 1
Average...4.8									

## Girls.

Physical Condition.	WHERE BORN.		Age.	Grade Finished.	No. Children in Family.	OCCUPATION.		Work.	Charge.
	Boys.	Parents.				Father.	Mother.		
Good...14 Fair... 9 Poor... 2	Native...23 Foreign... 2	12 13	12... 1 13... 2 14... 4 15... 5 16... 6 17... 5 18... 2	None 1 3... 3 4... 5 5... 6 6... 4 7... 2 8... 4	1... 2 2... 3 3... 2 4... 5 5... 6 6... 1 7... 1 8... 2 9... 0 10... 0 11... 1	Dead... 9 Deserted... 1 Unskilled... 8 Skilled... 6 Business... 1 Stepfather... 1	Dead... 10 Housework... 9 Washer... 3 Dishwasher... 1 Tailor... 1 Insane... 1	Never worked... 4 Housemaid... 8 Clerk... 3 Stenographer... 2 Laundry... 2 Tailor shop... 1 Stage... 1 Nurse girl... 1 Chamber maid... 1 Waiter... 1 Candy factory... 1	Stealing... 1 Prostitution... 14 Away from home... 10
Average...4.6									

Gonor-  
rhoea. 10

per cent. of all the boys born in Chicago, who live to be ten years of age, will be brought into the Juvenile Court as delinquents before they are sixteen. This does not take into account five per cent. of all children who will be brought into the court as dependents, and from whose ranks come a large number of delinquents.

During 1907, one-third of all the delinquent children brought into the Juvenile Court of Chicago were sent to some reformatory. On the average a delinquent boy sent to the John Worthy School costs the city for court expenses, Juvenile Home expense and school expense \$200 per year. On this basis, which is low when compared with the cost in other like institutions, the city of Chicago pays for its delinquent children committed to reformatories \$168,600 per year. We must remember that these figures apply only to children under sixteen. It takes only a casual investigation to convince one that a schoolboy who spends several hours a day selling papers is not nearly so apt to get along in his school work as a boy who is not subjected to this fatigue. Nothing kills interest like being unable to keep up with the class. Failing to make a grade marks the beginning of many a laborer's career for one who might have been a skilled workman.

Judge Kerr, of Minnesota, says that three-fourths of the total number of prisoners who have passed through his court were unskilled laborers. Hardly a factory to-day will take an apprentice who has not finished the eighth grade, and many factories demand graduates of technical high schools. What chance is there for a boy who loses out so early in the game?

The various steps in the production of juvenile delinquency have been known and talked about for years. The commonest example is that of the home which for some reason does not functionate and as a result the child is sent out to bring in money. In the unequal struggle for the few cents which he gets, the child loses health, both moral and physical. The frequent example of this child is the newsboy. The average newsboy if he works three hundred and sixty-five days a year does not earn over \$100. If he becomes a delinquent it costs the state at least \$200 a year to care for him. When we remember that twelve out of every one hundred boys between ten and sixteen become delinquent, and that over sixty per cent. of these boys come from street trades, it does not take long for a business man to figure out that it is rather poor

economy to let a ten year old boy go into at least this field of labor.

I was brought up on a farm and I have known some farmers that would work in the rain, but I never heard of one that did not know better than to hitch a half grown colt to a plow.

To summarize:

1. The production of juvenile delinquents causes the state an enormous expense.

2. Child labor is one of the important, if not the most important, factor in the production of juvenile delinquency.

3. Lack of school and stunted physical development in the majority of cases prevent a possibility of any future but that of unskilled labor for the average child who is sent to work too early.

4. From an economic standpoint the family who sends out a ten year old boy to sell papers loses a great deal more in actual money from the boy's lack of future earning capacity than the boy can possibly earn by his youthful efforts. In other words, this sort of labor from an economic standpoint is an absurdity.

There is no doubt that the age limit at which children are permitted to work outside of school hours should be raised. If a ten year old boy is not permitted to work in a factory why should he be permitted to work half of the night in the street selling papers? Some of our Eastern cities are compelling all children working on the street to be licensed in order that better track may be kept of them. But why, when the sum total of such work is a loss to the state as well as to the individual family, should it be permitted at all? Why should ten boys be wasted on a job which two men could do without running either the physical or moral risk? At present a psychopathic clinic is being organized in connection with our Juvenile Court. Not so much to study shapes of head and sizes of ears as to follow delinquents into the actual crime producing environments with a view of doctoring the environment instead of the criminals.